



AGENDA

NORTH MIAMI CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2013
7:00 P.M.

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TAB J

- DISCUSSION REGARDING 2014 NORTH MIAMI MARDI GRAS
Sponsored by: Councilman Jean R. Marcellus



Proposal for
2014 North Miami Mardi Gras
Presented to the City of North Miami City Council
January 2013
By Ringo Cayard



Every major metropolitan city in America has at least one signature event. New York City has the New Year's Eve Celebration. Washington, D.C. has the Annual Cherry Blossom Festival. Toronto has Caribana. Our neighbor cities have several events. Miami has Art Basel, the ING marathon, and the Annual Food and Wine festival. Miami Gardens has *Jazz in the Gardens* each spring. When people think of the city of North Miami, what do they remember? What is our city's signature event? Major cities need a signature cultural event to rally the community together and showcase what the city has to offer. **The 2014 Mardi Gras should be the signature event of the City of North Miami.** I propose that the City of North Miami host a Mardi Gras in March of 2014. From 2003-2006, I hosted and produced "Mardi Gras" in the city of Miami. What follows is my proposal to spearhead the creation of this signature event for our beautiful city.

Mardi Gras marks a day of tradition with deep historical roots celebrated across the world. Referencing the Tuesday preceding Ash Wednesday, the words *Mardi Gras* translates from French to English as Fat Tuesday and marks the beginning of fasting for Lent. As is traditional in many cultures, before a period of fasting and reflection, *Mardi Gras* represents a day of to indulge in delicious cuisine, enjoy the company of friends, and celebrate the privileges of freedom. New Orleans is most commonly associated with the festival of *Mardi Gras* in the United States. Over the years, that city has gained international acclaim and recognition for their grand celebrations. While New Orleans is unique in its history, their ability to attract investments while promoting and sustaining an annual boost in economic stimulus is not unique. Nor is New Orleans unique in having a diverse community and storied history worthy of such a celebration. North Miami is a diverse and culturally rich city with deep heritage and its own

history to celebrate. *Mardi Gras* is a unique vehicle through which we can celebrate our wonderful city while providing a boost to our economy.

Events like *Mardi Gras* serve as a gateway to the community. Further, community-wide events like the potential **2014 City of North Miami *Mardi Gras*** are helpful to improve relations between elected officials, law enforcement, and citizens because they highlight a common interest while naturally increasing pride in the city of North Miami. The **2014 City of North Miami *Mardi Gras*** will bring the community together and enhance cultural knowledge and awareness. *Mardi Gras* has a natural connection with the celebration of Carnival, which communities have celebrated since the times of Ancient Rome in cities across modern Europe, the Caribbean and the Americas. Traditional *Mardi Gras* and Carnival-inspired events include parades, marches, floats, dance, and other street performers. These elements come together into an intricate festival that attracts diverse participants and sponsors, while reinvigorating and celebrating the unique qualities and culture of a community. A North Miami *Mardi Gras* would continue these traditions by making them available to our South Florida community.

Beyond their cultural significance, *Mardi Gras* celebrations provide tremendous booms to their host areas. The city of New Orleans brings in 88 percent of its annual revenues just from *Mardi Gras* alone. Other countries across the Caribbean generate an average of 67 percent of their yearly gross revenues from *Mardi Gras* and Carnival events. More than 20 countries produce large rates of revenue while providing employment for nearly all of their permanent residents during *Mardi Gras* and Carnival seasons. The City of North Miami is in a position to capitalize from the timeless model of *Mardi Gras* that has been replicated by cities large and small for more than century.

Potentially generating gross profit of \$1.75 for every dollar spent, the City of North Miami stands to benefit from a limited investment of bringing *Mardi Gras* to its community. Through various methods of fundraising, city will be able to provide this event to its public free of charge—as is the case with comparable festivals, parades, and celebrations. In order to further manage costs, the **2014 City of North Miami *Mardi Gras*** will take place on a Sunday, March 9, 2014 from 12:00PM-9:00PM—following Ash Wednesday and after all the other *Mardi Gras* and Carnival in the Caribbean, Brazil and New Orleans have taken place. This will be an important component of the North Miami *Mardi Gras*'s success because our participants will be able to reuse costumes, decorations, and variety of accessories from the other events. This timing provides a charitable way of saving the city money and keeping costs low. It also prevents our having to compete with larger celebrations for press, sponsorship, and participants. In terms of other municipal services, the North Miami Police Department stands to double its annual revenues for this event since a full double staffed police force is needed to properly secure the event. Television, radio, newspaper coverage of the event will advertise the positive attributes of the *Mardi Gras*, providing a natural boost of visitors and tourism to the City of North Miami.

The **2014 City of North Miami *Mardi Gras*** will require a small budget of approximately \$120,000 per year, which would be potentially divided into monthly allowances of \$10,000 per month. To ensure the greatest opportunity for success, I propose that work on the 2014 *Mardi Gras* begins now. For the aforementioned fee, I will:

- Coordinate this event and help bring most of the organizations and representatives from the 23 countries represented in the former Greater Miami *Mardi Gras*.
- Complete an economic impact study to assess the benefit to North Miami's economy and tourism.

Because of my years of hands-on experience in providing high caliber guaranteed professional *Mardi Gras* celebrations across South Florida, The City of North Miami can be confident it will benefit significantly from working with me to facilitate the production of a North Miami *Mardi Gras*. The initial budget appropriation is a small amount to ask from the City of North Miami when taking into consideration the potential and substantial cash benefit for the city and for the business owners in the community in the long run. After 2014, the *Mardi Gras* only stands to become larger and better—this proposal on a first time investment, which does not reflect the full profit potential of the city, its people, and business.

Beyond the direct monetary benefits to the government of North Miami, local organizations in the surrounding area stand to gain a significant increase in business due to the festivities. Other private and public industries, government agencies, and city employees will also benefit from this event. Revenue gained from local business and investment by local partners and sponsors will offset the cost of police staffing and other city expenditures. For the weekend of *Mardi Gras*, restaurants, museums, shops, and hotel will enjoy increased traffic and other benefits. One thing is for sure; the unemployment rate will significantly decrease in the City of North Miami thanks to *Mardi Gras*!

Upon approving this proposal, the City of North Miami will join the ranks of the great American cities through committing to have a signature event that will bring the community together. Most importantly, hosting a *Mardi Gras* in the city of North Miami is a great way to put all differences aside once a year in order to build an enduring, financially profitable, and culturally enriching festival of life and joy. I whole-heartedly encourage you to support this proposal and advance our shared mission to improve the quality of life for the people and City of North Miami.



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HEADLINE: MIAMI, GET READY! MARDI GRAS COMING

BYLINE: JACQUELINE CHARLES, jcharles@herald.com

BODY:

So you missed the big fete in Trinidad & Tobago. And you couldn't decide between Rio and Haiti, while New Orleans completely escaped your mind.

No problem. Mardi Gras is coming to Miami.

This Sunday, the streets of downtown Miami will be transformed into a kaleidoscope of colorful costumes and floats as the euphoric sounds of cumbia, compas and batucada dance through the air.

The creation of some Haitian-American activists, with input from carnival lovers of all backgrounds, Miami Mardi Gras will be more than a street party, organizers say. It's a \$600,000 prebirthday celebration for Haiti's upcoming 200th anniversary, which organizers hope will become an annual event rivaling Calle Ocho and New Orleans' Mardi Gras.

"This is our chance to show the world what our culture is about," said event organizer Ringo Cayard, who sees Miami Mardi Gras as something that can help boost the city's slowly rebounding tourism economy.

Cayard, who is head of the Haitian American Foundation Inc., said the event will be an international affair that not only commemorates Haiti's influence in the Americas but carnival celebrations throughout the continent.

He said organizers had originally hoped to hold the party in February, before Mardi Gras on March 4, but moved it back because so many other events were scheduled then.

FLASHY COSTUMES

MIAMI, GET READY! MARDI GRAS COMING The Miami Herald April 10, 2003 Thursday FINAL EDITION

Not to be outdone by Miami Carnival, Miami Mardi Gras will also feature its own share of elaborate costumes, some of which were shipped in directly from Haiti and used during that country's Jacmel carnival.

"People are always showing the negative images of Haiti, but Haiti is so full of positive things," said Michaelle Craan, the matriarch of Jacmel's 120 year carnival celebrations who has been serving as a consultant on Miami Mardi Gras.

Popular Haitian artists like Sweet Micky and T-Vice will be joined by Jamaica's Byron Lee & the Dragonaires, Colombia's Grupo Niche and popular Miami soca deejay Giselle D Wassi One, to name a few.

ARRAY OF MUSIC

Cayard says the multicultural array of music is appropriate because Haiti helped Simon Bolivar and Francisco Miranda win the independence of Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and Ecuador. "Having all of these cultures come together especially in carnival, which I think is one of the most unifying experiences there is, is a wonderful thing," said Giselle D Wassi One, who is asking everyone to "walk with their flags."

And that is one of the reasons why the City of Miami, which will shut down parts of Biscayne Boulevard for the 2 p.m. parade, decided to help sponsor the event, said Michelle Spence, the city's special events director. In addition to providing in-kind police and fire services, the city provided a \$30,000 grant for the event, which takes place from 2 p.m. to midnight adjacent to Bayfront Park. Miami-Dade County chipped in about \$300,000.

"Everyone is excited about what is happening this weekend," Spence said.

"I think this can be a great event."

LOAD-DATE: July 19, 2005

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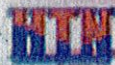
GREATER MIAMI MARDI GRAS

ENTRADA
GRATIS

**Desfile de Carrozas, Comida,
Musica y Diversion para
Toda La Familia**
12pm - 7pm

**Sabado
Marzo 4
2006**

Bayfront Park
Downtown Miami



www.GreaterMiamiMardiGras.com